

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM



No. 156

OCTOBER 21ST, 1942

DEAR MEMBER,

The Archbishop of Canterbury has come very well out of the hullabaloo following his speech at the Albert Hall meeting. There has been a rally of public opinion in his support against his critics.

THE ALBERT HALL MEETING

No speech by a public man in recent times has called forth such a flood of correspondence. A chaplain writes to me that he is certain that the Albert Hall meeting will capture the imagination of the man in the street as nothing else has done. The speech has been discussed and approved in circles that have no connection with organized religion. It contained nothing startlingly novel and embodied no revolutionary proposals. The explanation of the thrill which has stirred wide circles must be sought elsewhere. What the popular instinct at once recognized and seized upon was that the Archbishop had made it plain that the Church was not necessarily on the side of the *status quo*. That is in itself nothing new. But many, both within and without the Church of England, have tacitly assumed that it is bound up with the traditional order. The circumstances and the moment were opportune, and the Archbishop succeeded in conveying to the nation that in the perplexity and despair of to-day the Church has something of its own to say, and is ready to make its independent contribution without fear or favour.

It goes without saying that Christian leaders must avoid the danger of seeming (in the words of one critic) to "clothe with peculiar authority highly disputable opinions about purely temporal affairs." No one has been at greater pains to insist on this than the Archbishop himself. It is no less plain, as was pointed out in *The Economist*, that for the leaders of the Church to disregard their social responsibilities in the present crisis of civilization would be an admission of spiritual bankruptcy. Professor A. C. Pigou made the point that if the Archbishop were denied the right to express an opinion on any matter in the economic field because he is not an expert, the prohibition would also rule out most letter-writers, leader-writers and politicians, many of whom have devoted less study to the subject than the Archbishop. Criticism in competent quarters was directed not so much against his intrusion into this field, as to the fact that in this particular instance he was, in the judgment of his critics, mistaken.

The speech of Sir Stafford Cripps at the same meeting raised issues, the discussion of which would require a good deal more space than is available this week. But whatever differences of view there may be on some questions, there reverberated in this address, as in the speech the following day at Bristol, the great Christian note of compassion—a poignant sympathy with the multitude in their need. He was wholly right in his passionate insistence that for Christians the purpose of God must overrule every private and selfish interest and that the great need is for more courageous Christians in political life. It is the simple truth that there are not to-day enough wholly committed Christians to bring about the regeneration which society needs. This question is dealt with at a profound level in this week's Supplement.

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

With this issue the Christian News-Letter completes its third year. We gave an account a fortnight ago of the formation of the Council of Churches and the Christian Frontier. We want the Christian News-Letter to play as large a part as it can in furthering the common cause served by these two undertakings.

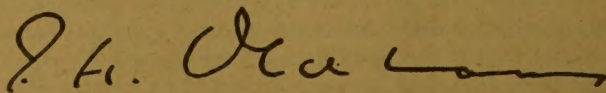
If Christians are to act effectively in the present situation they must acquire increasingly a common mind, outlook and purpose, transcending ecclesiastical and political differences. They need a means of communicating with one another across existing boundaries. This is what the Christian News-Letter seeks to provide. It tries to keep in view both the progress of the Christian movement as a whole and what is significant from the Christian point of view in the general thought, activities and happenings of our time. The attempt to do this is only possible because of the association of the News-Letter with the Council of Churches and the Christian Frontier and the help generously given by those actively participating in the work of both these bodies. The new developments ought to enable us to do our job better in the future than in the past.

Both our collaborators and our readers are drawn from the most diverse religious, political and educational traditions. The News-Letter enables them to learn from one another and so to grow towards a common Christian understanding of the situation and its demands.

We believe that a considerably larger number of people would wish to become members of the News-Letter if they understood what it aims at providing. Our membership has remained fairly constant for over two years at a figure between 10,000 and 11,000; it is read by a much larger number, since many copies are passed on to others. This seems an appropriate time for a determined and sustained effort to extend the circulation, and we intend to make it. Many of you will doubtless be glad to serve the common cause by helping in the effort. You can do this by explaining the purpose and character of the News-Letter when you have occasion to refer to it in conversation, or in an address, or in a letter to your friends. We can let you have specimen copies to enclose in a letter or if you prefer post them direct to addresses supplied to us.

The writer of this week's Supplement is a minister of the Church of Scotland in Selkirk. He is also the translator of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, to which reference has been made more than once in the News-Letter.

Yours sincerely,



Subscriptions—The rate of subscription to the News-Letter is 12s. 6d. (\$3.0 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year. Subscriptions for six months (6s. 6d.) can only be accepted for destinations in Great Britain and Ireland. Back numbers—4d. each, 1s. 2d. for 6, 1s. 11d. for 12 copies. Post free.

Bound Volumes—Volume I (Nos. 0-26), Volume II (Nos. 27-52), Volume III (Nos. 53-78), Volume IV (Nos. 79-104), Volume V (Nos. 105-130). Uniformly bound in green cloth with gold lettering and index. 8s. 6d. each, post free.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.